

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BANGKO 02436 111246Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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R 111143Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 695

S E C R E T BANGKOK 2436

EXDIS

EYES ONLY FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB FROM KINTNER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TH

SUBJECT: SECDEF STATEMENT ON US FORCE LEVELS IN THAILAND

1. ACCORDING TO WIRELESS FILE, IN AN APPEARANCE LAST WEEK BEFORE A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER COMMENTED ON US FORCE LEVELS IN THAILAND. HE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "WE WOULD PLAN TO REDUCE SUBSTANTIALLY OUR FORCES THERE, AND WE ARE REDUCING THEM. AS THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA STABILIZES, ONLY A RESIDUAL FORCE WILL REMAIN." THE WIRELESS FILE ADDS, "HE ESTIMATED THAT SUCH RESIDUAL FORCE WOULD NUMBER FEWER THAN 10,000."

2. WE HAVE SO FAR NOT BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN FURTHER DETAILS ON SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S COMMENTS ON THAILAND, BUT WE ARE TOLD THAT IN A 44-PAGE STATEMENT (PRESUMABLY HIS PREPARED TESTIMONY) THERE IS NO REFERENCE TO THAILAND, SO WE ASSUME THE REPORTED COMMENTS WERE MADE IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS.

3. I AM DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THESE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO SECRETARY SCHLESINGER. THE THAI HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE TO ANY APPEARANCE THAT IMPORTANT DECISIONS ON US FORCES IN THAILAND ARE BEING MADE UNILATERALLY BY THE US WITHOUT OUR CONSULTING OR ADVISING THE THAI, AND THAT WE ARE PRESENTING THEM WITH FAITS ACCOMPLIS. AMBASSADOR  
SECRET

SECRET

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ANAN AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN MADE THIS POINT

PERSONALLY TO THE SECRETARY LAST FALL AND RECEIVED HIS ASSURANCES THAT WE WOULD CONSULT THE RTG IN SUCH MATTERS. CHARUNPHAN (WHO MAY CONTINUE IN OFFICE AS FOREIGN MINISTER) ADVISED THE THAI PUBLIC OF THESE ASSURANCES.

4. THEN ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT, WE WERE ABLE TO PREVENT THE THAI FROM GIVING THE PUBLIC IMPRESSION THAT REDUCTIONS IN US FORCES WERE NOW UNDER BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS HERE. CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE THAI SUPREME COMMAND, GENERAL KRIANGSAK, A KEY MAN TO US HERE, WAS INDUCED TO SAY AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT GIVEN THE CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION IN INDO-CHINA, WE AND THE THAI HAD NOT RPT NOT DISCUSSED FORCE REDUCTIONS. HE DID THIS ONLY AFTER A BUREAUCRATIC STRUGGLE WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. NOW, WE HAVE OUR OWN SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (IF CORRECTLY QUOTED) SAYING THAT WE ARE REDUCING OUR FORCES AND TALKING ABOUT AN ULTIMATE LEVEL WHICH IS FAR BELOW CURRENT LEVELS.

5. THIS EMBASSY IS NOT ARGUING AT THIS POINT FOR OR AGAINST ANY PARTICULAR FORCE LEVEL FOR THE US IN THAILAND. WHAT WE HAVE BEEN PLEADING FOR IS THAT THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH WE GET FROM HERE TO THERE BE CONDUCTED IN AN ORDERLY FASHION AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE THAI, SO AS TO AVOID DAMAGE TO US-THAI RELATIONS. I FEAR THAT THIS OBJECTIVE WILL BE FATALLY PREJUDICED BY STATEMENTS SUCH AS THAT REPORTEDLY MADE BY SECRETARY SCHLESINGER.

6. I HOPE YOU WILL FIND AN EARLY OCCASION TO POINT OUT TO SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND ANY OTHER US OFFICIALS WHO MIGHT BE ADDRESSING THIS MATTER IN PUBLIC THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING SUCH ACTIONS. IT IS DIPLOMATICALLY ESSENTIAL THAT THE INITIATIVE IN ANNOUNCING FORCE REDUCTIONS COME FROM THE RTG AFTER MUTUAL CONSULTATIONS.  
KINTNER

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 11 FEB 1975  
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**Subject:** SECDEF STATEMENT ON US FORCE LEVELS IN THAILAND  
**TAGS:** PFOR, MARR, TH, US, (SCHLESINGER, JAMES R)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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